

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SCCT-01 SY-04 AID-05 OPR-01 IO-10 /075 W

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P R 101131Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TOSOUHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8774

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

G59

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 1256

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINLKN PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY BANNED, LEADERS ARRESTED IN WAKE OF
ASSASSINATION OF SHERPAO

REF: ISLAMABD 1223

1. THE GOP HAS JUST ANNOUNCED (ADLUT NOON FEBRUARY 10) IT HAS
BANNED THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) AND CONFISCATED PARTY
PROPERTY AND FUNDS UNDER SECTION 6 OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES
ACT. RELEVANT LEGISLATION PROVIDES FOR DISSOLUTION OF A
POLITICAL PARTY "WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED
THAT A POLITICAL PARTY HAS BEEN FORMED OR IS OPERATING IN A
MANNER PREJUDICIAL TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OR INTEREST OF PAKISTAN..."
THE ACT ALSO REQUIRES THE GOP TO "REFER THE MATTER TO THE SUPREME
COURT WHOSE DECISION ON SUCH REFERENCE SHALL BE FINAL."

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2. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET MADE ANY

SPECIFIC CHARGES OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SATURDAY'S ASSASSINATION OF NWFP MINISTER SHERPAO, BUT MOST NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) WERE ARRESTED LATE FEBRUARY 9 UNDER DEFENSE OF PAKISTAN RULES. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE FUNERAL, CONDOLENCE MESSAGES AND MOURNING PROCESSIONS CONTINUE TO PLACE INDIRECT BLAME ON THE OPPOSITIKVXPFOR THE POLITICAL MURDER, WITH OCCASIONAL INFERENCES DRAWN OF AFGHANNVESPONSIBILITY. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO RETURNED TO ISLAMABAD AT 2245 HOURS FEBRUARY 9, TOO LATE TO GIVE DIRECTION TO MOST OF THE DAY'S FUNERAL ACTIVITIES. THE BURIAL AND PRCESSIONS WERE ORGANIZED BY THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES' PARTY AS SHERPAO WAS LAID TO REST, EULOGIZED AS A MARTYR WHO HAD DIED FIGHTING FOR HIS COUNTRY' SECURITY AN INTEGRITY.

3. CONSULATE GENERAL LAHORE REPORTS ARREST OF NAP LEADER WALI KHAN WHILE TOURING RURAL PUNJAB WITH OHWER LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF). PAPERS ON FEBRUARY 10 ADD NAMES OF OTHER NAP LEADERS ARRESTED INCLUDING SIZEABLE CONTINGENT FROM NWFP.

4. PUBLIC REACTION TO ASSASSINATION IS PRIMARILY ONE OF SORROW WITH SOME ANGER THAT SO MANY INNOCENT BYSTANDERS WERE ALSO INJURED. MOST FREQUENT COMMENT IS THE NEED TO CATCH AND PUNISH THE CULPRIT(S) AND BRING TO AN END THIS KIND OF PUBLIC VIOLENCE. THE MEDIA, ON THE WHOLE, HAS NOT BLAMED NAP OUTRIGHT - A TYPICAL COMMENT IS PPP PARTY-ORGAN URDU-LANGUAGE MUSAWAT'S EDITORIAL WHICH SAYS INTER ALIA THAT THE "PROVACATIVE SPEECHES AND IRRESPONSIBLE STATEMENH BY OPPOSITION LEADERS CAN LEAD TO SUCH INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM". ONLY INDEPENDENT NAWAIWAGT SPECULATED EDITORIALY THAT IT "COULD BE THE WORK OF AFGHAN AGENTS WHO ARE OUT TO CREAT CHAOS AND CONFUSION". (ABOVE MEDIA REPORTS PUBLISHED, OF COURSE, WERE PRIOR TO BAN ANNOUNCEMENT.) PPP-SPONSORED PROCESSIONS IN RAWALPINDI AND PESHAWAR CALLED TO MOURN SHERPAO'S DEATH ARE REPORTED BY GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES TO HAVE INCLUDED SPEECHES AND SLOGANS RAISED CALLING FOR THE BANNING OF NAP.

5. TOO EARLY TO ASSESS PUBLIC REACTION TO BAN ON PARTY AND ARREST OF NAP LEADERS. CONSUL EVERTS FROM PESHAWAR REPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT SHOPS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED
FEBRUARY 9 AND 10
DUE TO MOURNING. BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT HAVE BEEN CALLED TO MEET EVENING OF FEBRUARY 10 WHEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION WILL CLASH OVER THIS ISSUE, UNLESS OPPOSITION DECIDES TO BOYCOTT SESSION IN PROTEST.
LUPPI

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